

Fisk Decries US Arms Dealers

MEDIA BIAS ALSO COMES UNDER ATTACK DURING SPEECH AT STEWART BIO

BY JAMES YAP

Prize-winning journalist Robert Fisk took the opportunity to present his views on the arms trade and media bias at his talk last Thursday at McGill.

Fisk, Middle East Correspondent for London's *The Independent*, spoke at an event organized by, among others, Amnesty International, QPIRG Concordia, and the McGill Department of Islamic Studies.

In his first public appearance in Montréal, Fisk expressed his opinions on the ethics of the international arms trade and the bias he perceives in western coverage of events in the Middle East.

Much of Fisk's speech centred around the 1996 attack on a Palestinian civilian ambulance by an Israeli Apache helicopter. The missile attack on the ambulance killed two women and four children. Israeli military officials claimed at first that the ambulance was owned by a Hezbollah guerrilla, then later claimed that the ambulance was actually carrying a guerrilla.

According to Fisk, who arrived on the scene shortly after the incident took place, the owner, who was also the driver, was not affiliated with Hezbollah in any way. The only other male in the van was a domestic painter who also had no such affiliations.

To help the audience grasp the full scope and reality of this tragedy, Fisk showed footage taken of the wreckage, the corpses of the victims, and the anguish of the survivors.

After summarizing the incident, Fisk went on to describe how he found a missile fragment with the manufacturer's code on it. It was an AGM 114C 'Hellfire' missile manufactured by Boeing and Lockheed-Martin.

He then recounted the tale of travelling around the world to confront officials on how they feel about their weapons being used to murder innocent civilians.

Sadly, the precedence of political and financial considerations over any ethical considerations shone strongly through in their responses.

An official of Boeing told Fisk, "Whatever you say, please don't quote me as saying anything critical of Israel's policies," while a spokesperson for Lockheed-Martin refused to comment on what he thought of the missile attack, and did in no way make a commitment to investigate the incident.

Fisk mused whether the fact that Lockheed-Martin had recently signed a contract to undergo a joint venture with an Israeli munitions company had anything to do with the company's reluctance to co-operate with his investigation.

But by no means did Fisk restrict his attacks to the US arms dealers. The western media also bore a substantial share of his criticism for what he perceived was a general bias in its reporting on events in the Middle East. He gave examples of the scant coverage given to the attack on the Palestinian ambulance, and pondered whether the coverage would indeed have been so scant if it had been Israeli civilians in an Israeli ambulance killed in an unprovoked attack.

Using another example, he told a story of Israeli soldiers attacking a Palestinian neighbourhood with anti-tank weapons, while the youth in the same neighbourhood could only respond with stones as the soldiers left their destroyed homes behind. According to Fisk, CNN footage of the event claimed that these Palestinian youth, who had just had their homes destroyed, were "protesting peace."

Fisk did acknowledge, however, that the western media's "reluctance to face up to the realities of the Middle East is in no way unique to us," for events in the rest of the world are often

skewed in the Middle Eastern media. For example, Fisk claims, they "try to deny the truth" surrounding the Holocaust in the Arab world. "Hitler can be read, but Fisk is banned" in Lebanon, he notes ironically, referring to the fact that one can purchase a copy of Hitler's infamous book, *Mein Kampf*, while one of his own books has been banned.

But Fisk did not need to use footage of civilian war victims to demonstrate the Arab frustration at the western media's reporting bias. This frustration was quite tangible in the room, in the atmosphere created by the mostly Middle Eastern members of the audience. They jeered and occasionally hissed quite readily at comments made by people in the film or in excerpts of articles that Fisk read out. Indeed, they did so almost too readily at times; they seemed all too eager to accept Fisk's arguments.

Much could be gathered from the dynamic of the audience and the questions they asked. For example, the bitterness caused by the conflict in the Middle East

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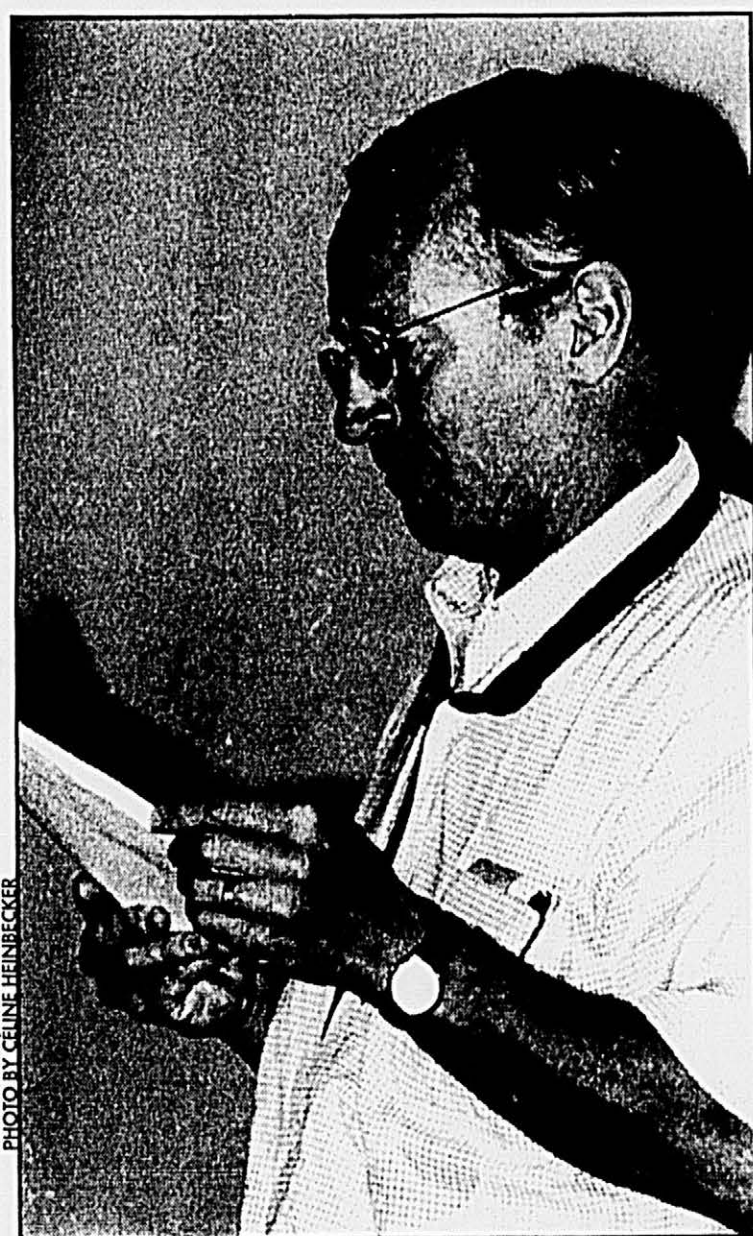


PHOTO BY CÉLINE HEINBECKER

JOURNALIST ROBERT FISK SPEAKS AT MCGILL LAST THURSDAY

QPIRG Continues Push for "Green McGill"

BY GREGORY KAUFMAN

McGill's stance - or rather, lack of a stance - on environmentalism is a matter of concern to some students. A few, however, have taken it upon themselves to do something about it.

Unlike most other prominent universities in North America, McGill does not presently have a formal environmental policy. As McGill prepares to open its new School of the Environment in September, now would be the time for the implementation of just such a program. According to

Mike Watson, Coordinator of the Campus and Community Environmental Action (CCEA), a QPIRG sub-group, "The main problem is that no environmental policy exists. There is no framework in which environmental policies can be carried out." CCEA, however, is not sitting back on its laurels. Since 1994, campus organizations have been working towards "greening" the McGill Campus.

Here is the rundown of how attempts to make McGill a more environmentally friendly school

have culminated to this point, and what the plans are for the future.

In October 1994 and March 1995 the McGill Environmental Coordinating Committee (MECC), formerly the Waste Management and Recycling Coordinating Committee, performed a waste audit. As a portion of the audit, assessments were made on one day's worth of waste produced at McGill. Based on the study it was discovered that as much as 50% of McGill's refuse was actually

(continued on page 10)

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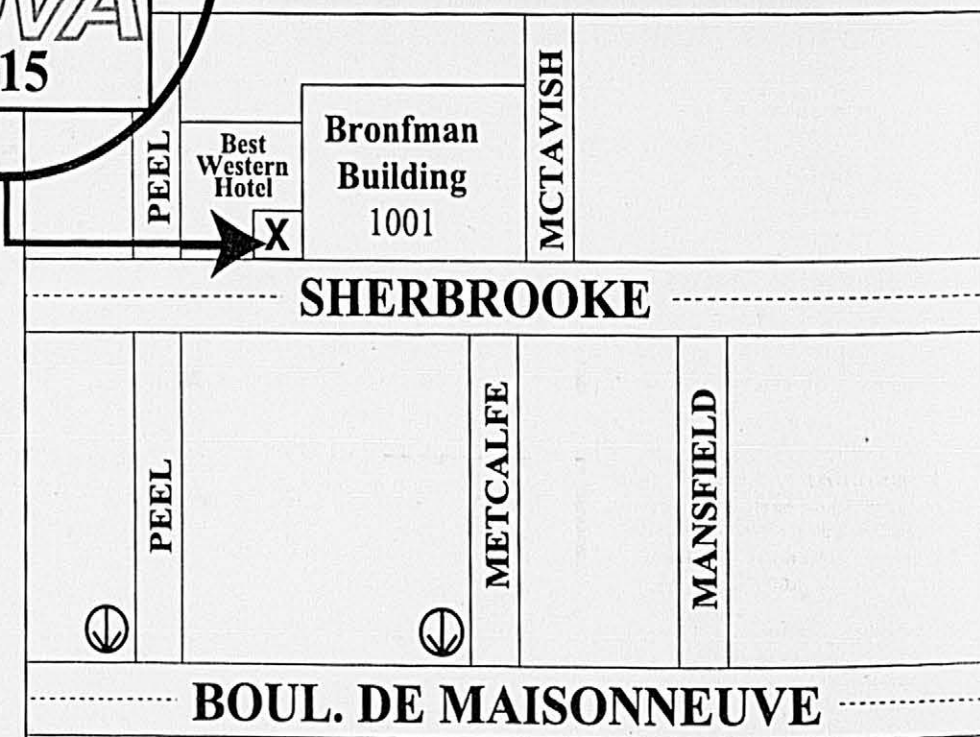
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Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

While I appreciate the coverage of our Nov. 5th talk "Future? What Future" in The Daily ["How I Spent My Summer" Nov. 9], errors abounded in Alex Hill's article. And although I am not overly averse to being misquoted, my concern lies in the misrepresentations of the Palestinian refugee situation in Lebanon.

Most importantly, Hill cites that the massacre in Shatila "occurred in 1992 [...] as violence erupted in the camp." The massacre in Sabra-Shatila was in 1982, not 1992, and not as a result of violence erupting within the camp. Rather, the inhabitants of the camp were surrounded and attacked by the Phalange, a Lebanese Christian

militia, with Israeli military support.

Lastly, Mr. Hill comments at the end of his article that Bourj Al-Barajneh camp "was created in 1948 (making it as old as the "state" of Israel)". Of course, all writers can conclude on their personal angle, but the author's use of quotations when referring to Israel might have been taken by some readers as an extension of unrecognition on our part of Israel, which, I must clarify, is neither my personal position nor that of CEPAL (Canadian-Palestinian Educational Exchange).

Andrea Kirstin Becker
CEPAL-Short Term Volunteer Program

Erratum

In "Bouchard, Charest and la Belle Province," on November 9, the statement was made that Bouchard "...switched to the PQ during Mulroney's regin..". In fact, Bouchard left the PC's to found the Bloc. Québécois. We apologize for the error.

Culture goes pop!

find out how on November 23 when the pop culture special issue explodes in your hands. Your submissions are needed! stop by the daily office, shatner B-03 and speak to james and louigi about writing articles or creative pieces.



A week with the Liberals

We've told the UN there's no evidence of social problems in Canada; we've shut the gates on refugees; and we're on our way to Malaysia to lend our unyielding hand to the world-wide suppression of human rights, and the expanding gap between the rich and poor. Our Canadian representatives, our federal Liberals, have done this, and more, in just the last week.

Let's begin with the denial of social problems. Less than three weeks before Canada must appear before the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, in a review of the country's human-rights protections, our government has sent a report to Geneva defending what has clearly been a decline in the standard of living for the lowest echelons of our social hierarchy.

The review is done every five years under an international treaty Canada signed five years ago. Unfortunately for the Liberals, their assault on social programs is catching up to them. Canada was asked by the UN Committee, among other things, to explain poverty, homelessness, shortage of low-rent housing and unemployment among disabled people. The question on homelessness had two parts: a) the level of homelessness in Canadian cities; and b) at what point would Canada describe the problem as a national emergency.

To the first, the government's report claims that there are no reliable statistics on homelessness. To the second, well, our government just refuses to answer this question.

Questions pertaining to the number of Canadians paying more than their shelter allowance for rent were also ignored. As to the doubling of food-bank use that has transpired in the last decade, the Liberals had no comment.

In my estimation, a central component of democracy is accountability. How can we hold our government accountable, if they withhold information regarding the social costs of the neoliberal eco-

conomic programs they administer. To say that there are no reliable statistics on homelessness is condescending to Cana-

BY
JEFF
WEBBER

dians. In an age of astounding technological advancement, when the collective will of the populace is recorded and re-recorded through opinion polls on every conceivable issue, for the federal government to say that they simply could not come up with an estimate on homelessness is dumbfounding.

As though this alone wasn't enough for last week, a UN High Commissioner, Sadako Ogata lamented Canada's new found reluctance to accept refugees unless they meet traditional immigration criteria. In effect, people who need resettlement because they are facing persecution or oppression, now need to demonstrate that they are educated, skilled or have the ability to speak English or French.

In defense of the Liberal's immigration policy, Gerry Van Kessel, director-general of the Immigration Department's refugees branch, told the Globe and Mail that "If we stop looking at resettlement criteria and it costs more, we'll end up taking fewer refugees."

But if one considers this statement closely, does it not seem that Canada is actually saying no to refugees in general? When the government has virtually the same requirements for 'refugees' as it does for 'regular' applications for citizenship, Canada is simply accepting people who meet regular 'immigrant' status and naming them refugees for popular appeal. Meanwhile, those in the most dire situation - i.e. those without any education, skills or 'viable' languages - are left to fend for themselves. Quite obviously, refugees will typically require government support for a period of time before they are able to contribute economically to

Canada. But unless we are to reject the entire notion of accepting refugees, and in so doing retract our respect for humanity outside of 'Canadian' humanity, we cannot make the prerequisites for refugee status prosperity, skill, education, and the ability to speak one of our two languages.

Finally, last week Prime Minister Jean Chrétien left for Malaysia to attend this year's Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) conference. As I have noted in past columns, APEC represents trade liberalization between Canada and numerous countries that violate fundamental human rights. As everyone knows by now, last year we invited dictators including Suharto, from Indonesia, and Jiang Zemin, from China, to attend the 1997 APEC conference in Vancouver, B.C.

As it happens every year, this year's host country is violating the liberty of its citizens to protest against APEC and its implications for democracy, and inequity across the world. In Malaysia, where a permit is required for all public gatherings of more than five people, Canadian human rights organizations and activists from around the world are planning to stage a demonstration against APEC. In Kuala Lumpur this week the Malaysian government has been preparing for any public incidents with the lowering of commandos onto rooftops, and a harsh plan of action against any protesters who refuse to disperse after first being asked to leave. Rather than rejecting the repression of dissenting opinions surrounding APEC, Chrétien is attending the conference, united with dictators from around the world.

The Liberals have committed many more egregious acts in the last week, too many to fit in this brief column. But even with only these three examples, think of the overall cost this government is inflicting on Canada, and, indeed, the liberty of other parts of the world, with week after week of similar policies.

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editorial offices:
3480 McTAVISH ST., MONTREAL, QC., ROOM B-03, H3A 1X9
business and advertising office:
3480 McTAVISH ST., MONTREAL, QC., ROOM B-07, H3A 1X9
email: DAILY@GENERATION.NET editorial: (514) 398-6784
fax: (514) 398-8318 business/advertising: (514) 398-6790

business manager:
MARIAN SCHMIDT
assistant business manager:
PARVATI NEOGI
advertising management:
LETTY MATTEO, BORIS SHENOV
advertising layout and design:
MARK BROOKER

contributors:
BEN ERRET, CALINE HEINRICKER,
TERNA GYLSE, GREGORY KAITMAN

co-ordinating editor:
VERDA COOK
co-ordinating news editor:
JEFF WEBBER
co-ordinating culture editor:
ANNA ALFREDSON
news editors:
LOUIGI ADDARIO-BERRY, JASON CHOW
culture editors:
JULIA DAULT,
features editor:

photo editor:
LORI BRAUN
layout and design co-ordinators:
AMY PAPALIAS, JAMES YAP
office manager/ online editor:

débit français:
PATRICK PRIMEAU

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COMMENT

BY LOUIGI

ADDARIO-BERRY

I just wrote my last midterm on November 12 (last Thursday) amidst much moaning, groaning, and commiserating with my fellow students over our courseloads, workloads, and the horridness of life in general. We all sat down, were silent for two hours while we rapidly scribbled down whatever frenzied imaginings found their way into our heads.

When the exam finished, we jointly bemoaned the impossibility of the questions, the ludicrousness of the time allotted, and the fact that we were all going to fail without question. We went on like this for a few minutes, then swiftly parted, lured by the siren's call of the next assignment or paper, which would become our world for the next day, or week, or whatever, until a new task was assigned to us. And so the vicious cycle continues.

As things stand at McGill, every student is required to take a minimum of 27 credits per year (8 months), with a minimum of 12 per semester, to remain a full time student. The expectation, however, is for students to take a full complement: five courses per semester, for a total of 30 credits per year. The question I would ask is: why? McGill allows students 8 semesters for their 90 credits before special permission is needed to continue. This averages to 11.5 credits/semester. But a student must take an average of 13.5 credits/semester, or lose full-time status.

Given, the university needs to

maintain its reputation and quality as an educational institution. Given, the limit has to be set somewhere. But why force students to take so many courses that there is no time to partake in extracurricular activities should they desire to do so. "All work and no play make Jack a dull boy." So why force students into a frenetic pace, keep them completely busy with schoolwork, and end up with a bunch of graduates with diplomas and little else?

I doubt there are many people who would disagree that it's good to be well rounded. At the same time, the general attitude prevalent at universities - not just McGill - is that the harder the students are pushed, the better they'll be. I say, give the student body a chance to grow, in directions other than full speed ahead.

With this in mind, I have a few suggestions for ways the current system could be changed for students who have a mind to participate in activities that can't be encapsulated in six short digits and a credit value.

1) Reduce the number of credits required to maintain full-time student status. This is the most straightforward. Even a reduction of 3 credits, to 24/year, would make a big difference in terms of time commitment. This means 4 courses a semester, which allows participation in full-year activities without one semester being overly burdened.

2) Assign credit for roles in campus organizations. For example, certain positions at SSMU

clubs and at organizations such as QPIRG could be undertaken for credit. This would have a dual effect of a) enticing people to participate in such clubs and groups, and b) increasing the calibre - efficiency, commitment, or whatever - of the groups. The credits would be non-graded - the equivalent of the pass-fail option open to McGill students for all courses - and perhaps one or two credits assigned to a position, depending on the involvement of the duties.

3) Facilitate student-initiated projects for credit. This would not be hard to implement: indeed, honours projects and theses may well be said to fall under this category. My suggestion, however, would be to publicize and streamline such an undertaking, to allow students with initiative to independently study or research an aspect of their field without it being above and beyond their courseload. Moreover, considering the projects proposed would generally relate to matters of interest to the student proposing them, presumably, the quality of the material would be higher. This would also give the student a chance to begin to develop his/her specific interests within the field, useful should graduate school of any sort be on the horizon.

So, here lies my call-to-arms. I wish I had the time to start a committee to petition McGill to implement my proposals ... but unfortunately, the next assignment beckons. C'est la vie.

CONSTITUTION, SACOMSS FEE PASS

BY JASON CHOW

The votes have been counted and the results are in.

In last week's SSMU referendum, students have agreed to accept the new SSMU constitution. 1443 voted in favour of the motion while 304 opposed. 335 votes were spoiled.

The McGill populace also ratified an increase in the fees collected to support the Sexual Assault Centre of McGill Students' Society (SACOMSS). 1971 voted for the increase as 194 were against it with 33 spoiled votes.

SSMU President Duncan Reid was pleased by the result but was disappointed with the low voter participation. Of the 16 051 eligible voters, only 2082 ballots were cast for the referendum issue and 2198 were marked for the

SACOMMS fee increase.

"The turnout was lacking," said Reid.

Reid attributed the low participation to the fact that the issues were not controversial.

"Both initiatives were so consensus-based... They didn't generate any controversy. It wasn't a sexy issue," he said.

SSMU VP Finance Lorenzo Pederzani also attributed the problem to the same cause.

"I'm really not surprised [at the low turnout]. Policy changes are dry, not glitzy," he said.

After two days of voting, the number of cast ballots was dangerously low, insufficient for quorum. Reid put together a "war room" to plan how to increase the votes.

The plan worked effectively, with Thursday's cast votes out-

numbering the two previous days' votes.

In the end, despite the low numbers, the Chief Returning Officer declared that there was quorum.

The new SSMU constitution will take effect on May 1, 1999 while the \$0.75 fee for SACOMMS will be collected next semester from all students.

The referendum period also included the election of the executive positions of the First Year Students' Association. The new President Catherine Weiler won her post with 353 votes over David Schanzle who received 150. Vice President Kinga Grudzinski beat her opponent Amy Wong by a count of 278 to 231 while Alice Han took the External portfolio with 290 votes, 83 more than candidate Pauline Hwang.

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The situation of the Ogoni brings the conditions that the majority of Nigeria's 110 million-odd people live under into sharp focus.

The Ogoni live in the Niger Delta in Nigeria's southeast. They are principally fishers and farmers, producing first for their own needs and marketing their surplus to nearby urban centers such as Port Harcourt. Half a million people working hard to make a life for themselves in any other corner of Nigeria.

What marks this particular corner, the reason you're reading about the Ogoni at all, is that their land is squarely atop Nigeria's tremendous oil wealth.

Nigeria produces around 2.4 million barrels of oil on a good day (though these last few months haven't seen any of those). Oil revenues represent 80% of Nigeria's gross domestic product; somewhere around \$30 billion dollars a year - 90% of the country's foreign exchange earnings. This revenue has been the lifeblood of the military dictators who have ruled Nigeria for 27 of its 38 years of independence.

Oil wealth has allowed the country to drift in no particular direction for decades, other productive sectors of the economy more or less withering away. Politics has been a question of gaining access to this centrally administered bounty. The army has been able to buy civilian collaborators a-plenty, and just enough trickles down to the grassroots to keep people from open revolt. Nigeria has also been able to dominate the West African region both in "peacekeeping" operations in Liberia and Sierra Leone and in the form of quiet but timely "gifts" to neighboring countries.

Further, Nigeria's oil is too important to transnational corporations and their client Western governments to do without. Thus, the military can remain in power indefinitely without real criticism or meaningful sanctions as long as the oil flows. "Stability" is the familiar watchword guiding Western concerns with Nigeria.

But the Ogoni and other peoples in the Niger Delta see little or none of the profits extracted from their land.

The state owns all mineral rights in Nigeria, and though theoretically a portion of the oil money is supposed to be reinvested in the regions it's taken from, corruption means little actually is. Ogoni lacks adequate schools, clinics, roads, and access to drinking water.

(see page 7 side bar)



APACHA

BY TERNA
GYUSE

We didn't see the mountains ahead and so we didn't sense the upheavals to come,

upheavals that were in fact already in our midst, waiting to burst into flames. We didn't see the chaos growing; and when its advancing waves found us we were unprepared for its feverish narratives and wild manifestations. We were unprepared for an era twisted out of natural proportions, unprepared when our road began to speak in the bizarre languages of violence and transformations.

General Sani Abacha, seventh in a line of military misrulers, died in June in his mansion in the shadow of Aso Rock; died amongst his henchmen and herbalists, sycophants and heads of insecurity. A tear for him. It's said he died of a heart attack. Imagine: his own heart attacked him (It's only a rumor).

He was the seventh in a line of military dictators, who ruled in fear for four years, rarely seen in public, never once spending a night away from his lair under the Rock. Sitting silent in the presidential palace turning his fear inside out, transforming it into fear for everyone else.

This is a story for all of us who never see the seven mountains of our secret destiny, who never see that beyond the chaos there can always be a new sunlight. For Ken Saro-Wiwa, Moshood Abiola, Alfred

Rewane, Kudirat. For Sani Abacha himself. *This is a song of circling spirits.*

Now a new king sits at Aso

The destruction of Ogoni, the burning of villages, the terrorizing of its population may slip beneath the surface of international consciousness, but it smolders on.

Rock, General Abdulsalami Abubakar, surrounded by these denied spirits of the badly buried. In the shadow of his predecessor, he must speak and act clearly if he is to scatter the shadows.

Abubakar has promised an independent judiciary, and fresh and fair elections; he has begun to release political prisoners. But he rejected calls immediately following Abacha's death to appoint a caretaker government of representative civilians. Is he afraid of too quick, too close an examination of his own years as a member of the Provisional Ruling Council? When he sat silent or worse through the assassination of political opponents such as Kudirat Abiola and Alfred Rewane, allowing those they could not kill openly to die of neglect in prison, like Moshood Abiola and Shehu Yar'Adua.

Abubakar raised no known protest when Ken Saro-Wiwa and the other leaders of the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (see side bar) were killed. He has refused to return Ken's body

to his people. But Saro-Wiwa, and what he stood for, cannot be hastily hidden in an unmarked grave. The destruction of Ogoni, the burning of villages, the terrorizing of its population may slip beneath the surface of international consciousness, but it smolders on.

In the last few months, armed militants elsewhere in the oil-producing southeast have hijacked barges, kidnapped oil industry staff and seized key oil installations shutting down nearly a quarter of Nigeria's total oil output. Shell and Agip have been forced to cancel some of their delivery contracts. The army has deployed in the city of Warri, enforcing a dusk-to-dawn curfew in an attempt to control what's

These vultures are still around, circling and jostling to find new perches in a still-dry political landscape.

just short of an insurgency. The demands of the newly militant Ijaw are similar to those presented by MOSOP: greater control over the profits made from their land, development for the region that is the source of Nigeria's wealth.

MOSOP and most other opposition groups remain committed to non-violence, but the recent events in the Delta underline one possible result of decades of frustration of popular demands.

The demons surrounding the current transition program are legion.

The unquietest spirit is that of Moshood Kayode Abiola, the

winner of elections under a previous dictator in 1993, who died earlier this year, shortly before Abacha. He, by no means an ideal embodiment of change - a wealthy businessman, he had had the close contacts with the military necessary to land lucrative contracts - but he was the best the flawed program offered. And he was taken up by people all over the country, millions who lined up behind his picture to vote for him. They came out in the streets when the election results were annulled, and the anger could only be defused by the installation of a puppet government of civilians, shamefully including many supposedly pro-democracy politicians.

That transition was stalled, hijacked by corrupt politicians, manipulated by the military, lacking in ideological clarity, postponed, restarted, and repeatedly challenged by mysteriously-funded forces begging the army to stay on. These vultures are still around, circling and jostling to find new perches in a still-dry political landscape.

As voters' registration ended on October 19, the press was full of complaints from all parties, calling for cancellation. In many states, citizens unable to get cards had staged protests, occupied local government secretariats and in some cases attacked electoral officials suspected of malpractice.

Dr. Udentia O. Udentia, national secretary of the Alliance for Democracy party, said, "Any measure of success that will be announced at the end of the exercise will only exist in the imagination of government and INEC officials." He questioned the supposed registration of 60 million voters in one three day period, particularly in light of widespread shortages of cards and absent officials.

The assumption is that the cards were sold en masse to various parties who will then is-



THE POET, THE PRESIDENT AND THE DICTATOR— ALL DEAD. WHAT NEXT FOR NIGERIA?

sue them to their supporters. Blame has been aimed both at the electoral commission and at politicians from the Abacha transition. These have been dirtied by the self-succession gambit, and are now suspected of trying to manipulate the process with big spending behind the scenes.

The debate surrounding this first step exposes the problems facing a "transition to democracy" in Nigeria: there is intense suspicion of the legions of corrupt civilians who have collaborated with the military over the past 15 years. "Ephraim Akpata [the head of the electoral commission] is somebody I know very well. He is sound and incorruptible but he would soon be overwhelmed by these forces that do not want change. I advise him to just resign now," said Dr. Olu Onagoruwa, a former minister of justice.

The international community is keen to support General Abubakar's transitional program. Sanctions imposed by the West following Ken Saro-Wiwa's assassination in 1995 have been partially lifted. Canada, one of the most outspoken critics of the Abacha regime, is normalizing diplomatic relations and has pledged technical assistance for the election process. Unacknowledgeable forces also ghost this support: no one wants to be left out of the pri-

vation of state enterprises that Abubakar is carrying out. It remains to be seen whether this election can be carried out successfully. Even if it is, it will obviously be only a first, small step towards justice in Nigeria. The military government can

and Takum; to the unnumbered, many dying of dysentery, malnutrition, AIDS, car crashes, or armed robberies.

Or the 110 million still alive,



The petroleum industry—knowing full well that the military is dependent on its expertise—pays scarce attention to the protection of the environment. The Niger Delta is lit up at night by gas flaring; aging pipelines and flow stations regularly break down, contaminating creeks and farmland. Compensation for this damage or for appropriated land is scandalously low or non-existent.

Political clout in Nigeria is a function of wheeling and dealing by an elite fraction, every one claiming to represent some important (ethnic) unit in the struggle for a share of the national fufu. The Ogoni are a small group whose demands run counter to the needs of this elite. Unwilling to see their land destroyed, the Ogoni drafted a Bill of Rights in 1990, demanding greater control of their land and resources. This was submitted to—and ignored by—both the government and the oil companies. Led by MOSOP, the

Ogoni publicized their case on the world stage, attracting the support of large environmental organizations such as Greenpeace and the Sierra Club. They demanded that Shell cease operations in Ogoni immediately and pay reparations for the devastation already done.

When the images of oppression began to appear on European TV screens, the military and the oil industry knew something had to change. Royal Dutch Shell, the most important single company in Nigeria, had already suffered through public awareness and boycott campaigns in Europe—most recently protesting their plans to dump the Brent Spar drilling rig in a fjord in Norway.

The Nigerian government invaded Ogoni, destroying villages and killing more than 2000 people. Leaked documents show that the commander of the infamous Rivers State Internal Task Force had recommended 'wasting operations' against MOSOP's leadership in early 1994. Soon after, four Ogoni chiefs were killed at a rally in Giokoo and Ken Saro-Wiwa and the others were charged with responsibility.

The Nine were found guilty by a Special Tribunal and executed with no chance of appeal.

Ogoni remains under military occupation today. Many of MOSOP's surviving leadership are in exile overseas, but they continue to press their demands both internationally and in the new space at least temporarily available in Nigeria. This, according to Owens Wiwa the MOSOP representative in Canada, involves working with other pro-democracy groups in the Nigerian opposition to press for fundamental changes to the structure of the Nigerian state to enable minority groups to protect their interests.

THE PLAYERS



ABIOLA



AKPATA



KUDIRAT



REWANE

hidden and glorious radiance. I stared in trembling wonder at the mighty procession of wise spirits from all the ages, from eras past and eras to come. I watched the glorious stream of hierophants and invisible masters with their caravans of eternal delights, their floating pyramids of wisdom, their palaces of joy, their windows of infinity, their mirrors of lovely visions, their dragons of justice, their lions of the divine, their unicorns of mystery, their crowns of love-won illumination... I gazed at the royal and serene spirits from higher realms that restore balances. They were continuing their majestic procession to the great meeting-place in the mind and dreams of the world. They were moving temporarily from their adventures of infinity to our earthly realm which for centuries has cried out for more vision, more transformation, and the birth of a new cycle of world justice.

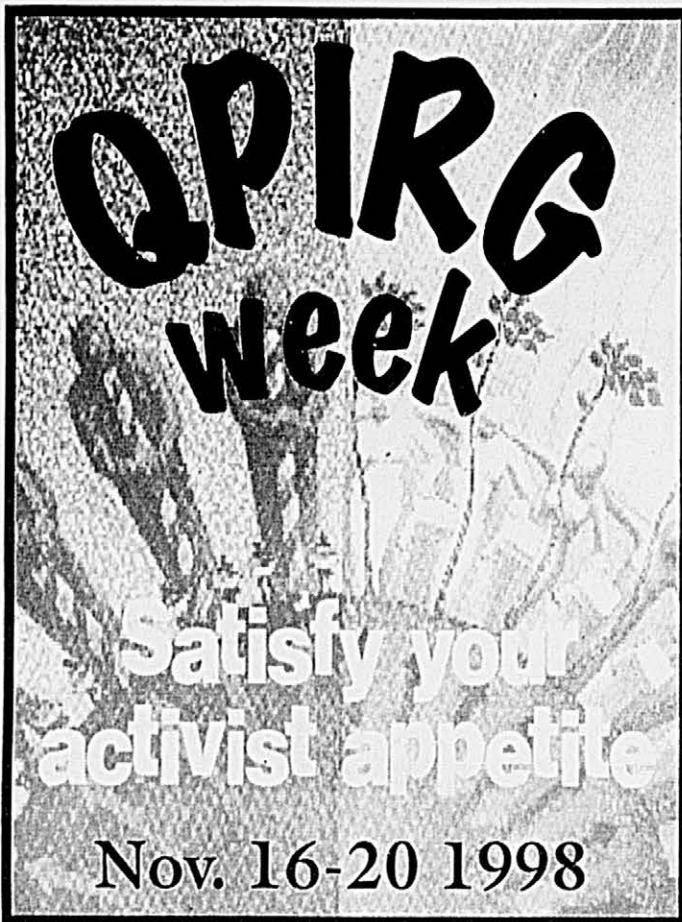
Sources: Tell, Tempo and The News Magazine for October,

personal interview with Owens Wiwa, representative of MOSOP Canada. Sections in italics from Ben Okri's *Songs of Enchantment*.

never answer to the 2000 dead in Ogoniland, the hundreds killed in street protests after June 12th; to the victims of communal conflict in Ife-Modakeke

still laughing, still hoping, at least some of the time.

I looked, and saw them again. I saw them in the revelations of moonlight. I saw their

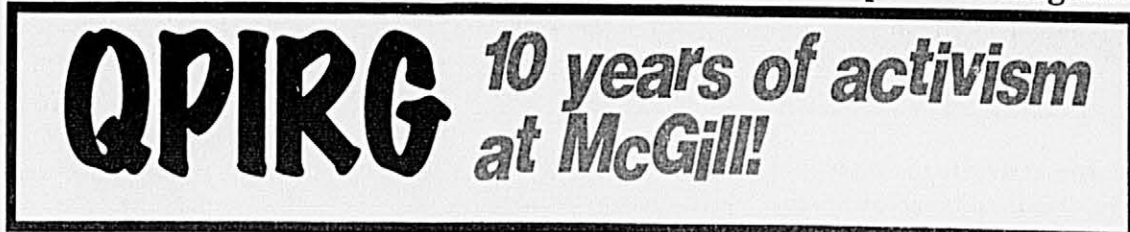


Welcome to QPIRG week, an ideal chance for you to participate in the events organized by QPIRG and its working groups. This week we will be promoting the social and environmental causes that QPIRG addresses. So satisfy your activist appetite, and be a part of social and environmental change in progress! Events like these happen every week at QPIRG. Please contact us to see what's going on.

Everyone is welcome!

Movies	Lectures	Meetings	Etc.
<p>Corporate Watch will be screening <i>Turbulences</i>. This NFB movie is about globalization and its effects in Canada and other countries. Tuesday Nov. 17 at 6pm, room 279 of Architecture building.</p> <p>Beyond McWorld: APEC MAI and anarchy: Resistance to globalization Thursday November 19 at 8:30 1455 de Maisonneuve W. Room 507.</p> <p>The Earth changes! A movie about climate change and what we can do about it. Also featuring a mini-expo of new climate friendly technologies. Friday Nov. 20 Stewart Biology room S1/3 at 4:30pm</p> <p>Removing the Masks, a documentary revealing three lifer's experiences with the justice system. Tues. Nov. 17, 7:30 McGill Faculty of Law 3644 Peel st., Atrium room (voluntary donation).</p>	<p>Cuba's Revolution in Urban Agriculture. Roberto Pérez Riviero a leader in the field will discuss how Cuba is transforming their food economy from import dependancy towards domestic production. Monday Nov 16 at 5:30 in Leacock 232.</p> <p>EarthSave is hosting Brenda Davis, a leading dietician who will speak on health and vegetarian issues. Tues. Nov. 17 at 7pm Leacock 26.</p> <p>Save our species. A lecture and slide show by David Suzuki, speaking on the urgent need to protect species at risk and their habitats. Organized by the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Association, and co-sponsored by QPIRG. Nov.19 at 7:30 in Leacock 132. Tickets cost \$10.</p> <p>Humanizing our criminal justice system for victims, offenders and communities. Panel discussion facilitated by Warren Allmand, former Solicitor General of Canada. Thursday Nov. 19 7:30. Wilson Hall 3506 University St.</p>	<p>Corporate Watch weekly meeting. In the QPIRG office at 5:00 on Monday Nov. 16.</p> <p>girlSpace weekly meeting. In the QPIRG office at 6:00 on Monday Nov. 16.</p> <p>EarthSave weekly meeting. In the QPIRG office at 6:30 on Monday Nov 16.</p> <p>Campus and Community Environmental Action weekly meeting. In the QPIRG office at 6:00 on Tuesday Nov. 17.</p> <p>QPIRG Board of Directors meeting. We are currently looking for new members, so please come by to find out more. Tuesday Nov. 17 at 6:30 in the QPIRG office.</p>	<p>QPIRG Library Open House. come see our collection of over a thousand books on alternative topics. Thursday Nov. 19 from 11-5.</p> <p>BloodSisters weekly drop-in information session. In the Women's Union (Shatner Building) from 1:30-3:30 on Nov 18.</p> <p>Come and have fun at the QPIRG Party! A coffee house with performers and an open mike. Free food! Friday November 20, 1998 at 8pm in Basement of Thompson House (3650 McTavish)</p>

Please visit our website to find out more about these events: <http://ssmu.mcgill.ca/qpirg>



The Quebec Public Interest Research Group at McGill, 3647 University St. 3rd Floor, Tel: 398-7432
email: qpirg@vub.mcgill.ca, web: vub.mcgill.ca/clubs/qpirg

Chagnon Previews Rest of Liberal Campaign

REP FOR MCGILL'S RIDING TALKS TO THE DAILY ON EDUCATION AND OTHER ISSUES

BY JASON CHOW

What is the first thing one does after a hard four weeks of political campaigning?

"Sleeping. I need sleep. I haven't slept enough for the last two weeks," said an exhausted Jacques Chagnon, incumbent Liberal MNA for Westmount-St. Louis.

And for this historic provincial election, he used athletic metaphor to describe his job: "The marathon is half done. The other half is beginning."

It has been a hard time for Chagnon, a man who has held the same post for the last 12 years, representing the constituency that includes McGill. A high profile Liberal candidate, he has been voyaging around the province, thumping the Liberal bible and pulling the party line in constituencies where the race is close.

Chagnon seemed exasperated and hesitant to make predictions on the outcome of his efforts: "When you come back, what will happen? I really don't know. I think we have to come back to the real things which will matter in the future years coming."

And for the Liberals, "the real thing" that matters most is the sovereignty issue: "We have to repeat and repeat again that the reelection of the Parti Québécois that the spectrum of another referendum be over our heads. And people all over Quebec are asking us to come back and focus on that particular issue."

He believed that his party were more apt at bringing the necessary changes because of their federalist stance: "We have more credibility.... It's hard to see what Lucien Bouchard has on his mind."

The new Liberal program, unveiled days before, has been interpreted as a clear break from the traditional policy of the Quiet revolution. Chagnon did not deny this change, believing that the state constructed during that era has become too large.

"We must observe that the Quiet Revolution has brought an insidious way of thinking since 1964. The Quebec state has been almost everywhere in our lives. The buck is always stopping at the state level. And it has broken

partly the sense of responsibilities that citizens should have," he said.

On the topic of education, Chagnon, a former education minister, employed double-speak, trying to appeal to both the out-of-province students and those who agree with the current policy.

"I don't believe that in the same country that

we have a difference of tuition fees for students coming from Hawkesbury [Ontario] as they do from Grenville [Quebec], the other side of the bridge!" he said.

"I don't believe that in the same country we have a difference of tuition fees for students coming from Hawkesbury [Ontario] as they do from Grenville [Quebec], the other side of the bridge!"

-Jacques Chagnon

But Chagnon added that Québec should not be expected to pay for others: "We would like to [dismantle differential fees].... And obviously, if we had the lowest tuition fees in Canada, we would easily get a very high level of Canadians.... But with our level of tuition fees is so low, all Canadians studying in one of our universities are subsidized by Quebec's population. Is that normal?"

On the topic of the upcoming federal Millennium Fund, Chagnon promised, if elected, to renegotiate the program. The Fund was a program announced in the last federal budget, promising scholarships to 100,000 students at the turn of the century.

"The first thing I would do is go to the federal government [and] negotiate how to manage that fund for Québec students. The



PHOTO COURTESY OF ASSEMBLÉE NATIONALE

JACQUES CHAGNON, MNA FOR WESTMOUNT-ST-LOUIS

student condition in Quebec is not the same as elsewhere in Canada..." He added that in Quebec, students have lower debt levels at graduation. At the same time, he said the main priority of a Liberal government would be to "find a form of reducing the level of indebtedness of Québec students."

When asked if he saw that the fund would reduce debt levels, he responded that "the millennium fund is directed to those who have the best students. The problem is that the students with the best marks are not those asking for bursaries."

He proposed a program in which student debt could be lessened by giving recent graduates a tax credit on their debt payments. He deemed that such a program "would be easier to administer and manage."

At the same time, he saw a political need for recognition of the federal government. Currently, Ottawa gives Québec around \$80 million for student loans and bursaries. "[The federal government] wants to have their image somewhere, and I understand that."

But his task at hand still remains to have his Liberals win enough seats to form a government. When asked what was keeping his energy, he simply answered "adrenaline." What remains to be seen is if adrenaline alone is capable of carrying his party over the top.

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EDDY BISHARA
PHARMACY

AIDS Could be Eradicated in the Next Century

HIV DISCOVERER STRESSES NEED FOR COOPERATION, PREVENTION

BY BEN ERRETT

With co-ordination of research and linkage of laboratories in developed countries with patients in developing countries, AIDS could be eradicated in the next century.

This was the message driven home by Dr. Luc Montagnier, discoverer of the Human Immunodeficiency Virus, and president of the Fondation Mondiale Recherche et Prévention SIDA. In a lecture entitled "15 years later: Looking Back at the Pandemic," given at Concordia last week, Dr. Montagnier spoke of several promising treatments for Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) that researchers around the world are currently studying.

However, he noted that the eradication of AIDS will require a three-pronged strategy, involving not only continued treatment and a vaccine, but also a rise in socioeconomic levels in the developing world which would allow those most susceptible to AIDS to access medical care as well as reducing the role of the sex trade as an employer in these countries.

Dr. Montagnier is in Montréal to present a series of lectures at Concordia, Université de

Montréal and McGill. Dr. Montagnier will speak tomorrow night at McGill on "AIDS on the threshold of the year 2000: Merging Western Experiences and African Realities." He isolated the virus in 1983 and published the first paper on HIV. This led to controversy in the scientific community as American doctor Robert Gallo claimed to have found the virus first. However, later evidence solidified Dr. Montagnier's discovery as the first. The blood test that was developed from this discovery has saved countless lives.

Reflecting on the progress that has been made since the disease was first identified, Dr. Montagnier gave an historical overview of the many problems facing scientists in the fight against AIDS.

"We know a lot on the molecular biology of the virus, but we still do not know the main problem of AIDS, which is why there is so much immune depression and why this immune depression is irreversible... It was first thought that the virus simply infected cells and killed them; it was later found that many cells that were dying were in fact not infected."

As Dr. Montagnier explained,

AIDS is what is known as a retrovirus. It functions by invading the cell and turning its viral RNA (genetic material) into DNA, the genetic material of the host. This new DNA is then integrated into the host's chromosomal DNA.

This process is known as reverse transcription, since the normal process of transcription involves the transformation of DNA into RNA. Once the virus is incorporated into the host's genome, it can direct the host to further propagate the virus.

"We can stabilize the infection: not cure it, but stabilize it, in many patients with a combination of protease inhibitors and reverse transcriptase inhibitors.... We are not curing the virus. Even in patients treated from the beginning, there are cells which still harbour the virus.... To eliminate this pool of infected cells, it was estimated that this treatment would need to be continued for six or seven years. This is very difficult to do."

Dr. Montagnier continued to explain that patients under this therapy would be the most likely targets for a vaccine. After this expensive stabilizing treatment the virus could be minimized. However, he outlined several of the major barriers to the develop-

ment of an AIDS vaccine.

"One [major obstacle] is the variability of the viral proteins, especially the coding proteins. We lack adequate animal models; the only close models are certain primates - one close model is the macaque monkey - and even there we can not extrapolate to our situation. Even if we achieve some protection in animals, we are not sure what the main factors are to produce this."

Despite these obstacles, Dr. Montagnier is optimistic about current research into inducing a cell-mediated response against proteins necessary for HIV function.

Further knowledge concerning the function of HIV will provide new treatment strategies. He concluded by noting that the understanding of AIDS will have a wide ranging effect on many infectious diseases.

"If we understand AIDS and how it suppresses the immune system, this could serve also for many other diseases. This could lead to better understanding and treatment of many other infectious diseases as well."

Dr. Montagnier will speak on Tuesday, Nov 17, 1998, 6:00PM, in the Fieldhouse Auditorium, Leacock Building, Downtown Campus, McGill University.

FISK GIVES TALK AT STEWART BIO

(continued from front page)

became strongly apparent during question period, where audience members generally chose to vent their political frustrations rather than ask Fisk questions clarifying the message of his speech. At one point a man began yelling in response to another man's question.

When a man stood up and raised questions about the exact figures surrounding the number of deaths in the Holocaust, Fisk became visibly upset, and this mood continued throughout the question period. He answered many questions impatiently, and seemed exasperated to find that people asked him questions he had heard many times before.

However, his level of preparedness (he read his speech directly from a prepared text, and had many audio/visual aids) would suggest that this was a lecture he has given many times before. It seemed strange he would not expect to hear the same questions repeatedly.

At one point, a writer from the Montreal Gazette asked what professional journalists trying to earn a living are to do when their bosses edit their stories or otherwise dictate to them how they should report. It is interesting to speculate why a Gazette journalist would be asking this question, given that the Gazette is owned by Canadian media magnate Conrad Black, who has often been criticized for the editorial control he exercises over his newspapers.

CCEA Calls for Official Environmental Policy at McGill

(continued from front page)

recyclable material. Under the wing of then VP Tavena, they were able to draw on these findings and develop a comprehensive "Green Plan" that was to serve as a framework for an environmental protection plan. Three years after it was drafted, none of the recommendations listed within the plan have been implemented.

With the restructuring of the VP portfolios in 1996, the position containing the mandate to deal with issues pertaining to the environment, then held by VP Tavena, was eliminated. The MECC no longer had any contact within the senior administration

and no longer had access to a budget. Without the funds to implement their propositions, the MECC was rendered ineffective and as a result have met only once in the past year and a half. Since that point, attempts have been made by the CCEA to bring the environment back to the attention of administrators and to reestablish the position of the MECC. A permanent chain of command and a formal policy would provide leverage to the demands of groups pushing for environmental responsibility.

In the spring of last year, with the support of SSMU and PGSS, a letter was sent to Principal Shapiro requesting that "the McGill admin-

istration formalize its commitment to environmental responsibility." In this letter they requested that the MECC be provided with a VP to whom they could report, and that the Committee be allowed to request a budget for implementation of programs. Principal Shapiro replied that he would confer with his VPs but as of yet no action has been taken by administration to meet any of the requests.

In the interim the CCEA continues to work towards creating awareness of environmental issues at McGill. During the two weeks of November 16-27, they will be holding events and manning kiosks across campus providing information on such topics as reduc-

ing our environmental impact, lowering consumption and living alternative lifestyles. They are also approaching student societies and faculties in an attempt to gain further support for their proposal, in hopes of demonstrating to McGill administration that there is strong support for environmental protection at all levels, and that this show of support will expedite the process of establishing an environmental policy for McGill.

"There are a host of problems at McGill" claims Mike Watson. With a formal structure in place the CCEA, Watson foresees many areas that could be improved in respect to their impact on the environment. An extended recy-

cling program, changes in purchasing policies, energy reduction and alternative material usage in labs are all areas in which improvements could be made.

This week the CCEA is sending a second letter to Principal Shapiro to find out if environmental responsibility has been added to the portfolio of a VP, or whether the issue has yet to be brought to a board meeting. The CCEA plans to further their efforts to urge for a mandate to make McGill a more environmentally responsible school. Ultimately, the CCEA's goal is to see McGill delegate a VP Environment, whose mandate is to deal specifically with campus environmental issues.

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